1 Interview Summaries

1.1 Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC)

Interview Type	Personal, State Agency
Interview Location	MHPC Offices, 55 Capitol Street, Augusta
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Interviewer	AGI / Richard Sutton (rs@appgeo.com)
Interviewed:	Dr. Arthur Spiess, Senior Archaeologist Elizabeth Trautman, Archaeology Lab Supervisor
URL:	http://www.state.me.us/mhpc/

1.1.1 Agency Overview

Established through a legislative act in 1971, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission is the state agency that functions as the State Historic Preservation Office in Maine. As such, the MHPC is responsible for the identification, evaluation, and protection of Maine's significant cultural resources as directed by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Using criteria established by the National Park Service, the MHPC evaluates data gathered from surveys, public inquiries, and other sources to determine the eligibility of specific Maine sites for nomination to the Register. More than one thousand sites in the state are presently listed in the Register.

MHPC reviews development activities for their effect on cultural resources, co-ordinates rehabilitation projects under the Preservation Tax Incentives Program, assists local governments in survey work and the design of preservation guidelines, and is involved in a variety of public education activities.

1.1.2 GIS Initiatives

1.1.2.1 Overview of GIS Utilization

GIS is used by MHPC for tracking properties and locations of archaeological and architectural significance. MHPC reviews approximately 2000 site projects per year and utilizes desktop GIS to assist in this process. These projects come to MHPC through DEP, LURC and federal agencies. MHPC characterizes their GIS effort as “halfway between paper and software”

1.1.2.2 GIS Operating Environment and Infrastructure

(1) ArcView seat at the MHPC offices.

1.1.2.3 GIS Data Resources and Requirements

1.1.2.3.1 Spatial Data

- Track buildings (significant standard is set by Historic Register). Survey is incomplete, with only about 25% of properties inventoried.
- Total of 7000+ prehistoric archaeological sites

- Total of 5000+ historic structures
- Total of 3000+ historic archaeological sites
- Inadequate funding is available for the proactive work of digitizing these hardcopy resources.

Existing data sets:
Basemap features:
Hardcopy USGS topographic maps are used for compiling locations of archaeology sites.
Black and white copies of these are used for inventorying buildings.
Site plans exist for a small fraction of both of these.
MHCP uses MeGIS basemap data locally for reference purposes.

Analysis layers, including:
- Archaeological and architectural sites data.
- Historic districts
- Topographic and floodplain maps for determining historic water levels for archaeological purposes.

Currently unavailable but desired data sets include:
Fully automated prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. MHPC would like to have all buildings of architectural consequence as well as accurately located archeological sites captured digitally and available for GIS display and query. Also
- Aerial photos of high quality, leaf off, preferably full color
- Soil types
- Complete, accurate digital raster graphic data (scanned, registered USGS quads)
- Scanned, indexed library of photographs pertinent to sites
- Easements data

1.1.2.3.2 Attribute Data

- MHCP maintains a database containing historical/archeological sites and historical buildings with UTM coordinates and physical address information. .

1.1.2.3.3 Data Issues

- MHCP are significant users of MeGIS data, but load and access it locally. It may be useful in future for them to have current, live access to more accurate contextual data.

1.1.2.4 GIS Applications and Application Requirements

- Through the Maine State Growth Management process, 250 municipalities have been provided with Generalized Architectural and Archaeological Sensitivity Area maps. Level of effort for producing these maps has amounted to between 45 minutes and one hour per map.

Planned future GIS activity and applications:
- Fully GIS based inventory and digital delivery of buildings and site plans. The ability to generate and plot building identification maps entirely from the GIS

- More completely integrated analysis and plotting for daily display, query and analysis activities

1.1.3 Other Relevant Issues

- Public access to information relating to archaeological resources must be restricted. Many of the architectural sites would be subject to looting by relic hunters if published. Readily available MHPC data stands to quickly compromise private property rights as well as integrity of the sites themselves. MHPC data enjoys an exemption from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Right to Know law to address this sensitivity.
- All federally funded projects in the state need to pass through the MHPC office for approval.

1.1.4 Major Benefits and Cost Justification

- Production of the Growth Management Architectural and Archaeological Sensitivity Areas maps could be streamlined to a pushbutton application using GIS. This could result in the task efficiency of cutting preparation times for these documents at least in half.
- Sharing inventories and information regarding historic and archeological sites with communities, regional planning agencies and other planning and preservation organizations will help to ensure inclusion of this information in the comprehensive planning process. Such information shared regularly and according to standard digital formats will result in qualitative improvement of these plans.
- Resources such as historic districts and individual properties identified as historically relevant could be Web-mapped in the context of their demographic and economic context, encouraging preservation incentives.
- GIS can assist MHPC in the ongoing development of its statewide historic preservation plan, as a useful tool for assisting in cataloging, indexing and prioritizing these resources.
- MHPC could acquire floodplain and inundation data with best available sources in the state to prioritize risks to historic structures.
- More fully automated and accurately sited archeological records could be used to analyze and predict locations of potential finds.